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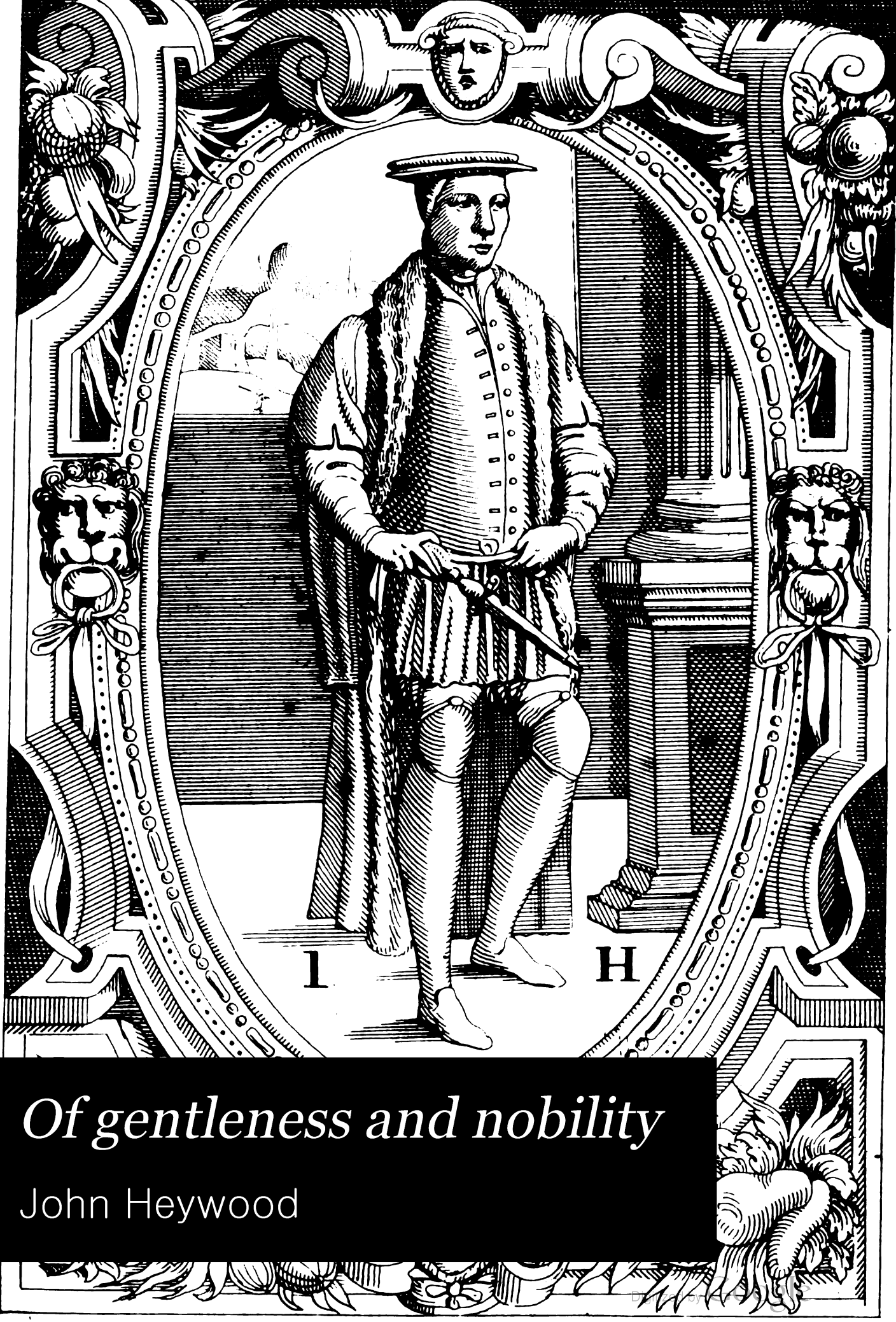

Of gentleness and nobility

John Heywood

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Of Gentleness and Nobility

[By JOHN HEYWOOD?]

Date of only known Edition, 1535?

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Gentleness and Nobility

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The Tudor Facsimile Texts

Under the Supervision and Editorship of

JOHN S. FARMER

Of Gentleness and Nobility

[By JOHN HEYWOOD?]

[1535?]

Issued for Subscribers by

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Of Gentleness and Nobility

[By JOHN HEYWOOD?]

It is a matter of uncertainty, more than doubtful indeed according to some authorities, as to whether this dialogue can rightly be attributed to John Heywood. It must at present suffice to say that recently discovered documents and facts tend somewhat to strengthen the supposition in favour of the attributed authorship, and to lessen the weight of the arguments drawn from differences of style and the like. John Heywood was a far more versatile man and of superior social standing than has been generally supposed (see "The Four PP").

The example from which this facsimile is taken is in the British Museum (Press-mark C. 40, i. 16), and the Catalogue says "(The Philosopher) [By J. Heywood?] . . . [London 1535]." Another copy is in the Bodleian (Ashmole) Library.

The portrait of John Heywood is pasted on a blank fly-leaf opposite the title-page of the original.

Mr. J. A. Herbert, of the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, after comparing this facsimile with the original copy, says, "The reproduction is exceedingly good but for one fault in printing, viz., excess of heaviness and 'muzziness.' This nowhere amounts to actual misrepresentation even of a single letter, so far as I could see, but it does less than justice to the usually clear and good printing of original."

JOHN S. FARMER.

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¶ Of Gentylnes and Nobylyte.

A dyaloge betwen the Marchaut the Knyght and the plowman dysputyng who is a verey Gentylman & who is a Noble man and how men shuld come to auktorryte / compilid in maner of an enterlude with diverys toys & gestis addyd therto to make mery passyme and disport.

The marchaunt

O what a gret welth and prosperyte
It is to any reme where marchauntes be
Hauing fre lyberte and entercours also
All marchaundyse to coüey to and fro
Whych thyng I haue vsed and the verey set found
And thereby gotton many a thousand pownd
Wherfore now be cause of my grete ryches
Thoroughowt this land in euery place doubtles
I am magnyfyed and gretly regardyd
And for a wyse and noble man estemyd

The knyght

Mayster marchaunt I here you ryght well
But now in presumption me thynk ye excell
To call youselfe noble in presence here
I wys men know what your auncestours were
And of what grete stock descendid ye be
Your fadyr was but a blacke smyth perde

March. ¶ Why syr what than what be you I pray you

Knyght. ¶ Mary I am a gentylman I wold ye know
And may dispend yerely v. C. mark land
And I am sure all that ye haue in hand
Of yerely rent is not worth v. markys

M ¶ But I wold thou knewest for all thy krakkys
I am able to bye now all the land
That thou hast and pay for it out of hand

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Wyych I haue got by myn own labour and wit
K ¶ Yet art thou but a chorle and I haue a skorn
Thou shuldist cōpare with me a gentylman born
M ¶ Why what callyst thou a gentylman tel me
K ¶ Mary I call them gentylmen that be
Born to grete landys by inheryptaunce
As myn auncestours by cōtynuaunce
Haue had this v. C. yere of whom now I
Am defendid and commyn lynyally
Beryng the same name and armys also
That they bare this v. C. yere ago
Myn auncestours also haue euer be
Lordys knyghtes and in grete auttoryte
Capteyns in the warr and gouernerys
And also in tyme of pease gret rulers
And thyn were neuer but artyfyceys
As smythe masone carpentarys or weuars
M ¶ All that is trewth I wyl not denye now
Yet I am more gentylman born than thou
For I call hym a gentylman that gentilly
Doth gyf unto other men louyngly
Such thing as he hath of hys own pper
But he that takith ought away from a nother
And doth gyf hym no thyng agayn therfore
Owght to be callyd a chorle euermore
But myn auncestours haue giffyn alwey
To thyn auncestours such thyng as they
By their labours did trewly get and wyn
For myn auncestours bildid howsis wherein
Thyne auncestours haue had their dwellyng place
Also myn auncestours haue made tolis
To all maner craftt men belongyng
Wherby clothis and euery other thyng
Where of thyn auncestours nede haue had
With the same tolys haue euer be made
So myn auncestours haue gyffin their labours
Euer to cōfort and help thyn auncestours
K ¶ I deny that euer thauncestours of thyne
Did euer gif to the auncestours of myne
At any tyme any thyng except that they
Gafe some what therfor other waye or money
M ¶ Mary god a mercy John for that now
That is euyn a pyg of our own sow

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How can lordys & estatis haue ought in store
Except thartyfycers do get it before
For all metalis be dyggyd furst by mynners
And after wrought by the artyfycers
Woll fell and euery other thyng
That is necessary to mannys couerynge
And all other thyngis that men vse & were
Is al wey made by the artyfycer
R I graunt that the artyfycers do make it
But be cause comenly they haue lytell wyt
Gentylmen that haue landys & domynyon
Of all such ryches haue most possessyon
For reason wyll euer it shuld so be
Wyse men to haue folys in captyuyte
M Mary as for wyt & subtell inuencyon
Myne auncestours wyth thine may make cõpison
For though my fader were a smyth what than
Yet was he a meruelous quyk wyttyd man
And coud work as well for hys pt
As any in this land dwyng that art
And deuyse new fassyons in thynges that he made
That euery man to bye hys ware was glad
And carue & graue in yron & steie
Both Image & letters meruelously weie
And ther on ley gold & gylt it also
Fyne & pure as any gold smyth coud do
My grauntfader also was a mason
Of grete wyt as any in thys regyon
And coud bylde a castell & tour tyght well
In whych some of thy kynnysmen now do dwell
Where in aper yth tyght good masonry
Wyth Imnagys & armys wrought curyously
My grete graundfadyr so was a weuer
Of wollyn yarn & of other gere
And made meruelous pleasaunt workis to be hold
Lynyn dyap sylk & cloth of gold
All such subtell thyngis as I haue reherlyd so
Myne auncestours by theyr wyttis coud work & do
And as for thyne auncestours I know no thyng
Thei coud do bi their wittis worth of praisyng
But vse occupi & wast euer more
Such thyngis as myn auncestours made before
And thou & thie anncestours hauig thoccupacion
Of such thingis wrought bi the opacion

All,

Of other men oughtist not be prayſed therfore
But the prayſe ought to be gyuen euer more
To the artyfycer whych by hys wyt
It deuyſyd and ſo cõnyngly wrought it
wherefore yf thou ſey that wyt & poleſy
Be the thyng perteynyng to gentry
Thyn auncestours may neuer cõpare wyth mine
For theyr act proue them wyſer than thyne
For thyn dyd neuer no thyng in theyr days
Concernyng quyk wyt that was worthy prays
yes I wis lewd Jauell I wold thou knewist it
Wyn auncestours haue had more wyſedome & wyt
Than thyne haue had & coud do alſo
Many thynges that thyne coud neuer do
For in the contrey at ſeſſyons and ſyſe
They haue be electe to be Juſtyce
And for theyer wyt and grete dyſcreſſyon
They haue Juggyd and donne correccyon
Uppon thyne auncestours artyfycers
That haue made falſe warys & ben dyſſeyuers
And holpe for to maynteyn euery thynge
That ys to the comyn welth pteynyng
They haue ben alſo in tyme of warr
Both in thys land & other coutreys farr
Dukys & leders of the hole army
And by theire wyttis & warly polycy
Study forecaſt & dilygent trauayle
Haue won many a grete fyld & batayle
And thyne auncestours that were there
were neuer able to bere ſhyld nor ſpere
And were neuer but ſoldyars & pyoners
Nor neuer had wyſdome to be rulers
But becauſe myn auncestours haue euer be
Dyſcrete & wyſe they haue had auctoryte
Nay nay thyne auncestours cam neuer all
To auctoryte for wyſdome pncypall
For though ſõe were wiſe yet ſome of thẽ agayn
Had ſmall diſcreſſion lytyll wyt or brayn
But becauſe of the long cõtynuannce
Of theyr grete poſſeſſions by enherytaunce
By the folyſh maner of the worlde we ſee
For that cauſe euer they haue had auctorite
And I ſay that good reaſon agreth to it
For though the fader haue no grete wyt

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The sone that is wyse shuld neuer the more
Lose hys land or auctoryte therfore
For he that by study dylygens & payn
Grete landys or possessyons doth attayn
Hys owne lyfe is to shorte & to lyte
For to take the frute of his meryte
Reason wolde therfore that after hys lyfe
Hys heyrs before straungers haue progatyfe
And the cōtynuaunce of such possessyons
Makyth noble men & gentyll condycyons
And they whos blode hath long contynued
As gentylmen so they shuld be honoured
And so myn auncestours long tyme haue be
Grete possyssyoners and in auctoryte
Therefore consyderyng my grete lynage
My blode my noble byrth and parentage
Thou art not able to compare w̄ me
Nother in gentylnes nor in nobylyte

Here the plouman cōmith in with a short whyp in hys hand & spekyth as folowith

Plow. Now here is bydbyll babbyll clytter clatter
I hard neuer of so folysh a matter
But by goddys body to speke the troth
I am better than other of you bothe
Auaunt kankerde chorle fro whens cōmyst thou
Mary folysh peuysh daw euen fro my plow
How sayst woldyst any thyng therewall
ye mary thou lewyd vyllayn & rud raskall
It is for the full yll beseemyng
To pturb any gentylmens talkyng
Gentylmen ye gentyl men Jak heryng
Put your shone in your bosome for weryng
I accompt my self by goddys body
Better than you bothe and more worthy
Auaunt knaue get the out of the gate
Or I shall lay my sworde on thy pate
That shall I proue I make god auow
Neuer in better tyme haue at the now

Et verberat eos

Now holde thy hand felow I the pray
And harkyn what I shall to the say
Sey knaue say what canst sey
Holde thy hand I pray the & com no narr
I am a marchaunt & no man of warr

Thou art not honest I tell the playnly
To make any quarrel here so sodaynly
To pturb our cõmunycacyon
Here ye may se syrs by goddys passyon
Two proude folys make a crakkyng
And when it cõmyth to poynt dare do no thyng
Our cõmyng hyder & our entent
ys not to fyght but by way of argument
Euery man to shew hys oppinyon
To see who coude shew the best reason
To proue hym self noble & most gentylman
By god all the reasons syth ye began
That ye haue made therof be not worth a fly
Mo syr I pray the than tell me why
Furst as touchyng noblenes I say
Ther is nother of you both dyd pue or lay
Ony of your actys wherby that ye
Shulde in reason pue you noble to be
Or therby deserue any maner praysyng
But all the effect of your arguyng
To proue your noblenes was but only
Of the deddys & actes of your auncestry
And of the actes that your auncestours dyd before
ye ar the nobler neuer the more
As touchyng my self I dare make compyson
Of as noble dedys as he hath any done
For I am & haue ben one of the cheualry
At the cõmaundement of my prynce euer redy
And euery tyme of warr haue be captayn
And leder of a .M. men or twayne
And w̃ hors & harnes spere and sheld
Haue Jopdyd my body in euery feide
The rentes of my landys haue spende lyberally
And kept a grete house contynually
And holp to ponysh theuys & brybers alwey
To the grete tranquylyte of my contray
And you maister marchaũt wyl neuer take labour
Except it be for your pfet and lucoure
Go to go to now maister marchaunt
There is a reason that gryyth you a taunt
I trow more than you can answere well
Nay I wys pryyth & rude Jak Jauell
I can make an answere so substancyally
Wher to nother of you is able to reply

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If thou canst answere my reason do
That can I well doo. P. Then go to fole go to
I say the comyn well of euery land
In fete of marcheuntdyse doth pryncypally stand
For if oure cõmoditees be vtteryd for nought
In to strange landis and no ryches brought
Hydyr therfore / we shuld come to beggary
And all men dryfyn to lyf in mysery
Thẽ we noble marchauntis that in this reame be
what a grete welth to thys land do we
we vtter our warys & by theyrs good chepe
And bryng them hyder that grete pfet
And pleasure dayly cõmyth to this regyon
Too all maner people that here do won
Forthermore ye see well w̃ youre eyes
That of straynge landis the cõmodytees
we haue such nede of them that be there
That in no wyse we may them for bere
As oyle sylkis frutis & spyces also
Golde syluer pryn & other metallis moo
All drãmys & druggys longyng to phyfyke
whych men must nedes haue when they be seke
whych in thys reame can not well grow
Our cõtrey is to colde & not hote I now
w̃ out whych thyngis we shulde lyfe in mysery
And oft tymes for lak of them we shulde dye
And I spende my studi & labour contynually
And cause such thyngis to come hyder dayly
For the comfort of thys land & cõmen welth
And to all the people grete pfet & helth
And for such noble dedys reason wyll than
That I ought to be callyd a noble man
And nother of you both that here now be
In noblenes may accompare w̃ me
Now well hit by goddes body well hit
Of one that hath but lyttyll wyt
Answere me one worde furst I pray the
what is the noblest thynge that can be
what saist thou therto thi self let see
Is not ẏ the noblyst thyng in dede
That of all other thyngis hath lest nede
As god which reynith ẏtern in blysse
Is not he the noblest thyng ẏ is
yes mary no man in reason can that deny

¶ Cwell than there is no reason therof why
But because he is the thyng omnipotent
And is in him self so suffycyent
And nedyth the helpe of no nothyr thyng
To the helpe of hys gloryous beyng
But euery other thyng hath nede of his ayde
¶ Mary that is very trough & well sayde
And lyk wyse ỳ thynge that hath most nede
Is the thyng that is most wreched
So suffycyency is euer noblenes
And necessyte is euer wrechydnes
And he that hath more nede of that thyng
For the p̃seruacyon of hys lyuyng
Then his felow hath his felow must nedꝯ be
By thys same reason more noble than he
what than. ¶. by the same reason it puith lo
ye be but caytyfꝯ & wrechis both two
And by the same reason pue I shall
That I am the noblyst man of vs all
For I haue nede of no maner thyng
That ye can do to help of my lyffyng
For euery thyng whereby ye do lyf
I norysh it & to you both do gyf
I plow I tyll & I ster the ground
wherby I make the corn to habounde
whereof ther is made both drynk & bred
wyth the which dayly ye must nedis be fed
I norysh the catell & fowlys also
Fysh & herbis & other thyngis mo
Fell herr & woll whych the bestis do bere
I norysh & preserue which ye do were
which yf ye had not no dowt ye shuld
Starue for lak of clothis because of colde
So both you shulde die or lyue in necessite
If ye had not cõfort & help of me
And as for your fyne cloth & costly aray
I cannot see whi ye ought or mai
Call your self noble because ye were it
which was made bi other menis labour & wit
And also your dilicate drinkis & viand
Bi other menis labours be made so pleasand
Therefore mayster marchaunt now to you I sei
I can not see but I am able & mai
Lyf wythout you or your purueaunce

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Lyue wythout you or your purueyaunce
For of fode & cloth I haue suffisaunce
Of my self for lyffing necessary
And now sir knyght to you I sey playnly
I see not that ye can any thyng do
For the cõmyn well or ought longyng ther to
But ech man beyng in auctoryte
Hauyng wit may do it as well as ye
Therfore to spek now of necessyte
Ther is nother of you both but ye be
In more nede than I therfore I sey playn
I am more noble than other of you twayn
Now that is a folyly reason so god me saue
For by the same reason thou woldyst haue
Euery best fylly & other foule than
To be more noble of birth than a man
For man hath more nede of bodely couerynge
Than they haue for they nede no thinge
The bestis haue herr & also a thik skin
The fisshy shalis or shells to kepe theyr bodyes in
The foulis fethrs & so euery thing
Bi nature hath his ppey couering
Saue man hym self which is born all nakyd
And therfore he shuld be than most wrechyd
Mary no man can make a better reason
For that is a sure & a trew cõclusyon
For if a child when he is furst born
were not holp & coueryd he were sone lorn
He hath no strenght to help hym neuer a dell
yet bestis haue power to help them self well
So cõsideryng mans body in dede
A best is more noble & man more wrechyd
Be cause he hath nede of many mo thyngis
Than bestis haue to help of theyr lyffyngis
Also man must dayly labour & swete
To get hym sustynaunce as drynk & mete
The grownd he must dyg & the bestis kyll
For brede and mete his bodi to fyll
Grapis frutis and herbis nosshy dyligently
To make good drynkis to refressh his body
But all brut bestis haue couerynge natural
Sufficyent to couer their bodyes with all
And fynd theyr fode euer on the grownd redy
with out any payn labour or study

So euery man by reason of hys body
Is more wrechyd & in more mysery
Than bestis be / yet this not wythstandyng
Man is most noble of creaturis lyuyng
Not by hys body for that is impotent
But by hys soule beyng so excellent
For by reason of hys soule intyllectyuall
He subdewyth all other bestis alyue
And cōpellyth all other bestis that be
By hys wit to releue his necessyte
But bestis haue no wyt them self to defende
Nor can get no more than god hath them send
For take any best that weryth heer
And do clyp it of bare a gayns wynter
That best hath no maner of polecy
To get other couerynge for hys body
Of cloth nor skyns nor hath no wyt
To put it vppon hym thaugh one haue made it
Nor can byld no house nor kyndyl no fyre
To warme hys body yf nede shuld requyre
But yet a man hath wyt & vnderstandyng
For to help hym self in euery such thyng
So man for his soule intellectuall
Is most noble creature of bestis all
¶ That is a verey good & preguant reason
yet me thynkith thou makist a degression
From the argument that we furst began
which was to pue who was most gentyl man
whych we disputyd I wold thou haddist hard it
¶ Tush I hard what ye seyd euery whit
¶ Then shew thy reason therin or thou go
¶ Nay be god I haue some what ells to do
I must go by me a halporth of gresse
The spokes of my cart therwith to dresse
Trow ye that I wyll leue my bysynes
For your babelyng pomp & folysshnes
Nay by sent mary I wyll not do so
For I can now to the merket goo
And for an halpeny as much gresse by
As shall cost me in our town a peny
And I tell the playnly wō out any bost
A halpeny is as well sauid as lost
¶ Straw for an halpeny therin is no wast
¶ Tary with vs a while phapps thou mast

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By our acquayntaunce now heye get more
Than thou gatist with thy cart this monyth before
P ¶ Straw for thi councell torde a fart
Trowist I wyll gyf up my plow or cart
And folow thy folish appityte and mynde
Nay I am not yet so mad nor so blynd
For when I am at my cart or plow
I am more meyyer than other of you
I wold not chaunge my lyf nor my lyffyng
For to be made a grete lorde or a kyng
There is no ioy nor pleasure in this world here
But hyll bely fyll and make good chere
Be it prynce lorde gentilman or knaue
Hit is all the ioy that heye he can haue
But these couetous and ambicious wretches
They set there myndys in honoure and ryches
So much that they be neuer content
So they lyf euer in payn and torment
But a man that can this meanys fynd
To haue fode and cloth and a mery mynde
And to desyre no more than is nedefull
That is in this worlde the lyf most ioyfull
Which lyfe in this worlde no man shall acquire
Till he subdew his insaciat desyre
M ¶ I see well thou has a curst appyh wit
Then yf thou wylt depart I pray the yet
Come agayn when thy bisines is doo
P ¶ For what intent now shuld I do so
M ¶ For we will in owre olde argument prosede
Who shulde be callyd a gentylman in dede
And we wolde be glade to heye thy reason
P ¶ I wyll come agayn uppon a condicion
That ye wyll wayt uppon me both twayn
And be not out of the way when I come agayn
R ¶ We wyll not be farr hens P. then I wil not fayle
M ¶ Then I pray the let not thi pmise quaile
P ¶ Lo heye is my fynger now trust me well
I will come agayn yf I haue my hele
For by god I promyse you one thyng
I am as trew of my worde as the kyng
But if I fynde you not heye then by my trough
I shall call you oppenly false knauys both
M ¶ Thou shalt fynde us trew in euery thyng
P ¶ I thynk so / except lyeng and stelyng

R Then far well for a ſeaſon a dew
Then fare ye well both I daye ſay as trew
As ſome that be tyede in newgate
M well now he is gone god ſpeed well his gate
But what ſhall we do now the meane ſeaſon
R Let us take now ſome reryeacyon
And come agayn here and keep our poyntment
M Now theyto I am ryght well content
And in the meayn wyle good lord of thy grace
Preſerue all the people heye in this place
Amen
Finis prime partis

¶ Secunda pars
The Plowman

P Here I may walk and wander to and fro
But I ſe not them whych I wold ſpeke to
M Yes by rode heye we be both twayn
To whom thou dydyſt prouys to mete here agayn
To dyſpute the queſtyon that we began
whych of us coud proue hym moſt gentylman
R Thou ſeydeſt thou haydyſt our argumentes all
P ſo dyd I wother good nor ſubſtancyall
For thy folyſh and pyuyſh oppynyon
was becauſe of the gyete donynyon
Of the landis and rentis wher to thou wall hoye
whych thyn auncetiours had long tyme before
Thou thynkyſt thy ſelf a gentylman to be
Ant that is a folyſh reaſon ſempth ne
For when adam dolf and eue ſpan
who was then a gentylman
But then cam the chuyl and gederyd good
And ther began furſt the gentyll blood
And I thynk verely ye do beleue
That we cam all of adam and eue
Then to ſpeke by reaſon grete poſſeſſions
Make no gentylmen but gentyl condyeyons
That is the cauſe and beſt reaſon why
One ſhuld be callyd a gentylman truly
And forthezmor mark well this reaſon then
If a mānis auncetiours haue be gentylmen
And vertyous and good to commyn well
That ought to be reputyd neuer adell
To the prayſe of the chylde whych doth refuſe

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Such good cõdycyons & the cõtrary vse
But he ought to be dyspraysyd the more
Because hys auncestours hath shewid hym before
A precedent of gentylnes & vertew
whych good example he dothe not insew
For the gentylnes of hys blode clery
In hym doth decay & vtterly dye
So he that vsyth cõdycyons verteous
Though that hys auncestours were vycyous
Ought not to be dyspraysyd therfore
But ought to be honoryd & praysyd the more
yet me thynkyth more honor shulde be gyfyn
To hym whych ys of noble blood & kyn
Then yf thou wylt loke honoured to be
Be cause of thy blod then mark well & see
The vylyst beggar that goth by the dore
Had ye not both one god & creature
ye cam of one furst stok & pgenye
Both of adam & eue ye wyll not denye
The beggar & thou wer both dowtles
Conseyuyd & born infylth & vnclennes
Thy blood & the beggars of one colour be
Thou art as apt to take seknes as he
yf thou be in the body woundyd
Thy flesh is as yll as his to be helyd
Alas I haue knowen many of thys
So proud of theyr byrth that all theyr lyffys
wold gyf them to no labour nor lernyng
whych brought them to myserable endyng
That in pouerte wrechydly dyd dye
Or fallyn to theft & hangyd therfore full hye
So I sey vertew & good cõdycyons than
Is that whych makyth the very gentylman
And though the fadyr may bequeth to hys son
Hys ryches hys land & hys possessyon
yet may he nothyr gyf nor bequeth
Unto hym in no wyse after hys deth
Hys vertew nor hys gentyl cõdycyons
They can not descend as other possessyons
And yf thou wylt be a gentylman nedys
Thou must than vse vertew & gentyll dedys
why desyre men then prayse euermore
Of the actis of theyr auncestours done before
One cause ther of ys for lak of lernyng

They pleyue not the reason of the thyng
A nother is be cause ther be many
That call them self gentylmen vnworthy
whych lyke voluptuously & bestyall
And do no good in the world at all
But lyke in pryde slouth & vnthryftynes
And be cause they haue no maner goodnes
Nor pperte nor vertew in them wher by
Any man shulde thynk them any prayse worthy
Therfore they seke for cõmendacyon
Of the acte that theyr auncestours haue done
Then I meruell men desyre to be callyd
Of the blode of them that excellyd
In worldly honour as kyngs & empours
where some were tyrantts some were cõquerours
And few desyre to be callyd of theyr blod
whych haue ben callyd Iust mẽ verteous & good
And vsyd indyfferent Iustyce & equyte
Mekenes abstynens or wylfull pouerte
yf I shuld tell the the verey cause trew
It is because they loue no such vertew
whych vertew & gentyll cõdycyons shuld be
Longyng to gentylmen of pperte
If gentyl cõdycyons be the cause lo
Then wyll I compare with both you two
For I haue vsyd euer gentyll maner
And so haue myn auncestours that before were
For furst of all when thys worlde began
Long after ther were but few people than
Men had kuffycyent of euery thyng
wyth oute gret labour for fode & clothyng
All thyng was in cõmyn among them doutles
But after warde when people dyd increse
Ich man to increse hys pleasure & volupte
Of goods & landes desyryd pperte
wereof grete stryf & debate dyd aryse
Thẽ such as mie aũcestours were that were wyse
Did studi to make laws how the people myght be
Lyffyng to gedyr in pease & vnyte
And agayns enmys alwey defendyd
The people that tyllyd the ground & laboryd
The people pleyuyng than theyr goodnes
Theyr gret wyt dyscreffyon & gentylnes
were cõtent to gyfe them pt of the pffet

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Comyng of theyr landes whych they dyd get
As corn catell & such thyngs as they wan
But after when that coyn of money began
They chaũgid those reuenuse & were cõtent
To gyfe them in money an ãnyell rent
So for theyr good & verteous cõdycyons
They cam furst to lãdes & possessyons
So possessyons began & were furst found
Uppon a good & resonable ground
By goggs swete body thou lyest falsely
All possessions began furst of tyranny
For when people began furst to encrese
Some gafe them seif all to Idylnes
And wold not labour but take by vyolence
That other men gat by labour & dylygence
Than they that labouryd were fayne to gyfe
Them pt of theyr gettings in peas to lyfe
Or ells for theyr landis money a porcyon
So possessyons began by extorcyon
And when such extorsyoners had oppressyd
The labouryng people than they ordeynyd
And made laws incruelous strayte & hard
That theyr heyrs myght inioy it afterward
So the law of inherytaunce was furst begon
whych is a thyng agayns all good reason
That any inherytaunce in the world shuld be
That is a shamefull opynyon semyth me
For when I haue labouryd & by grete study
Gat & purcheysyd landys truly
It is good reason that I haue lyberte
To gyfe those landis to whom it lyketh me
Or ells to let them descend lynyally
To my chyld or cosyn of my blod most nye
For inherytaunce must nedys be a good thyng
Because so much good therof is pcedyng
Euery man to hys blod such loue doth bere
Because the land shall descend to hys heyre
He wyll byld theron & the land improw
And make corn & grasse to encrese & grow
Graft frute set trees & norysh tymber
And to increase fysh make pondys wyth water
Stok bushis & wedes whych dystroy herbage
And all baren ground bryng to tyllage
And amend the hye wayes that be ther about

And do many other good dedis no dowt
For the pfet of hys heyrys that shalbe
And for the cōmyn welth of his countre
which thyngs surely he wold neuer intend
yf the land shuld not to hys heyre descend
By thy reason no nothyr thyng is ment
But a good dede vppon an yuell intent
when men for loue or pryd do such good dedis
The dyuell therfore shall quyt thē theyr medys
whyder god or the deuyll quyt them therfore
Is now to our purpose neuer the more
For theyr myndes & intentes no man can tell
But touchyng in herytaunce thys I wot well
Much good cōmyth therof & dayli doth grow
Nay mych Ill cōmyth therof I shall proue how
For these men that be of gret possessyons
Unto theyr blod haue such affeccyons
yf any land lyke them that lyeth nye them
Of theyr pore neghbors they wyll distroy them
Or by extort meanys they wyll them compell
The land for halfe the worth to them to sell
And when they lake money they wyl alwey
Euer borow & neuer wyllyng to pay
And when they shall dye ye see therpiense
Few of them haue remors of cōsyens
To make any maner restytucyon
Of any land so wrongfully gotton
Thou hast spoke sore agayns gentylmen
But what seyst thou of marchaundes then
Many be good and worshipful also
And many charitable dedis they do
Byld churchys & amend the hye ways
Make almyshowsys & help many decays
But some be couetous & full falsely
Get theyr goodis by dysseyt & vsury
And when they haue a. M. li. in theyr cofers
They wyll rathyr suffer theyr neyghbers
To sterue for hunger & cold & to dye
Or they wyll gyse to help them a peny
And yet more ouer when any of them be
Promotyd to rule or auctoryte
They dysdayn all lernyng law & reason
And Iugge all by wyll & affeccyon
Thou art but a rayler to speke so sore

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Agayne gentylmen & marchaunt euermore
Be not plowmen & other that dryke the cart
And such rustycall felows as thou art
Fals shrews & lyke as vycyously also
As gentylmen of land & marchaunt do
Yes this vylleyn carters almost echon
Haue nother cōscyens nor deuocyon
For brybe & stele euery thyng they wyll
If they may secretly come theruntyll
And as for prayer & dyuyne seruyce
They loue them in no maner wyse
Nor neuyr wolde labour nor work do
If nede of lyckyng drove them not therto
Yet gentylmen & the rych marchaunt that be
Use mych more vyce & iniquyte
Why thynkyst all marchaunt & gentylmen nought
Nay I sey not so that is not my thought
I am not yet so folysh nor so mad
For I know many good though some be bad
Yet some wyll suffer hys dett vnpayd tobe
And dye and lopd hys soule rather than he
Wyll any of hys land mynysh and empayre
That shuld after hys deth come to hys heyre
And some of them so proud be of theyre blod
And vse small vertew and doo lyttyll good
But gyke all theyre myndys and theyre study
To oppresse the pore people by tyrrany
And some of them thynk thys for a surete
It is the most honour to them that can be
To be able for to doo extorcyon
And to mayntayn it wythout punycyon
Bi goggys swet bodi thou art a stark knaue
Noble men and gentylmen so to depraue
What thou proud horesō fole whō dost thou knaue
I trow thou woldist a good blowe or two haue
Wyth a good whypstoke to tech the curtesy
Auant beggerly knaue I the defye
What wylt thou wage battell by & by now
That shall I proue straygh I make god auowe
Et hic verberat eos
Kepe the peace masters hold your hādys for shame
To make thys bestynes ye be gretely to blame
Ye wyll dysturb all thys hole company
Nay mary it is a cause to make them mery

To walke such a proude foole is but sport & gãe
By cokkys body were not for wordly shame
I shuld cut thy flesh or ell see thy herte blode
Sir hold your tõg your wordis benothyng good
we lose here w̃ thys lewyd altercacyon
Wych good pastyme and recreacyon
why what better pastyme her canst thou haue
Then to here one to call an other knaue
And see such a proud foole walkyd w̃ a whyp
But I loue it not therfore of felyshyp
Leue thys brablyng and w̃ good argument
Trye the matter that is most cõuenyent
Nay I wyll trye it how so euer he wyll
Be it w̃ wordys or ded I wyll answere hym styll
For be god yf he wyll not be cõtent
To be cõcludyd by good argument
I wyll cõclud hym one way or that I goo
Or I shall put it on hys pate that shall I doo
Thow spekyst lyk a clerk that hath lyttyll wyt
when a case is put yf he can not soyle it
By no maner reason that he can ley
Then wyll he answere hym thys wyse & sey
Beware what ye sey syr now I aduyse you
For it is treason or herysy that ye spek now
To the entent to rebuke hym oppynly
Before the vnlernyd people that stand therby
And yf he can no colour of such thyng fynd
Then wyll he vex and chafe in hys mynd
And cast owt some lewd word of quarelyng
To torn the hole matter to chydyng & fyghtyng
And so dost thou now lyke one that were mad
Nay I wold thou knewist thou folysh lad
I am nother mad nor dronken yet
For myn oppynyon I haue well puyd it
By substancyall reason and argument
That enherytaunce is not conuenyent
And shewyd better reasons than thou canst doo
Nay thy reasons may soone be answered vnto
For god defende that estates of enherytaunce
Shuld be dystroyed for by that good ordynaunce
Gentylmen of landes vndoutydly
Bryngе vp theyr chyldren full honourably
Some put to the scole to lerne cõynge
To instruct the people in vertuous lyuynge

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Some made to be actyke in marcyall ded(
Able to defend the land when nede is
And the rustycall people that haue no land
Such thyng(be not able to take in hand
wherfore yf we shuld dystroy enherytaunce
we shulde dystroy all good rule and ordynaunce
But such men as haue gret rent(and land(
And no estate but terme of theyr lyuys
And euery thyng theron wyll norysh and saue
For the grete zele & loue that they only haue
To the cõmyn welth of theyr contrey
And for god sake lo these people be they
That be worthy to haue possessyons
And such people of vertuouse condycyons
And no nother shuld be chosyn gouernours
& thei shuld haue lãd(to maintain their honours
Terme of theyr lyuys as long as they take payn
For the cõmyn welth thys is good reason playn
So that noman owght to haue any land
But such as be apt and haue charge in hand
For the cõmyn welth as pryncys and rulers
Bysshopp(curat(prechers and techers
Jugges mynysters and other offycers
That of the cõmyn welth be executers
And valyant men of the chyualry
That be bounde to defende the people dayly
Such men as be apt to all such thyng(
Shuld haue land(to mayntayne theyr lyffyng(
So enherytaunce is not besemynge
To let them haue land(that cã do no such thing
For I thynk it not resonable nother
One man to lyf by labour of an nother
For ych man is borne to labour truly
As a byrde is to fle naturally
For a man ought not to haue such lyberte
To lefe land(to hys chyld wher by that he
Shall lust for to lyke in slouth & gloteny
Compellyd to do nought but lyke voluptuously
There is alway good remedy for that
That is to compell them to do som what
So that ych man hauyng enherytaunce
Haue some auctoryte and gouernaunce
wherein he shulde take payne and besynes
To constrayn hym to eschew Idelnes

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Then thys grete myschef shuld folow of hit
Oft tymes they shuld rule that haue lyttyll wyt
Or dispoſyd to be proud & couetous
Or to lyke after theyr luſtis voluptuous
which yf ſuch men had auctoryte
Many thyngſ no dowte mys orderyd shuld be
where Juſtyce shuld be/there wold be tyranny
where peas shuld be warr debat & enuy
So there is no good reaſon that I can ſe
To proue that any enherytaunce shuld be
yes that shall I proue by good auctoryte
For rede in the byble and thou shalt therin ſee
God ſayd to abraham tibi dabo
Terram hanc et ſemine tuo
whych is as much to ſay to expounde yt trew
I shall gyfe thys land to the and thyn yſſew
Here is a good proue that it was goddes wyll.
That Abrahã and his blode shulde continew ſtyll
As poſſeſſyoners and haue the gouernaunce
Of that lande as theyr propre enherytaunce
Thou anſwereſt me now euen lyke a fole
As ſome of theſe fonde clarkes that go to ſcole
when one putteth to them a ſubtyll queſtyon
Of phylozophy to be prouyde by reaſon
whan they haue all theyr wyttes & reaſon ſpende
And can not tell how theyr parte to defende
Than they wyll aledge ſome auctoryte
Of the lawes or elles of deuynite
whiche in no wyſe men may denye
And yet ye knowe well that of phylozophy
The pryncyples oft contraryant be
Unto the very groundſ of deuynite
For the phylozophers agre here vnto
Quod mũdus fuit ſemper ab eterno
And deuynys quod in principio oim
Creauit deus terram et celum
But thou dydeſt promyſe openly euen now
Onely by naturall reaſon to proue how
That enherytaunce ought for to be had
By gogges body ſyrs I holde you bothe mad
ye be lyke ſome woman that I knowe well
when they wolde any matter vnto a man tell
They wyll tell.xx.talys by the way
Nothynge to purpoſe to the matter that they

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Dyd furst in tend to tell and declare
And in lyke maner now both ye do fare
For ye dysput now whytheyr enherytaunce
Be a resonable thyng or a good ordynaunce
whych is a matter no thyng preynyng
To the questyon mouyd at the begynnyng
For the questyon was whych of vs all thre
Coud proue hym selfe most gentylman to be
As touchyng that we haue all spoke & layd
Ich man for hys pt as much as can be layd
Nay I haue yet reasons lakt wherby I can
Pue my selfe of vs all most gentylman
That nother of you both can voyde by reason
If thou haue ought ell to say now speke on
Then to you both answer me thys short clause
Is not gētyll cōdycyons the most prinypall cause
To make one to be a gentylman
Paraduenture it may be so what than
Paduenture qd a
Nay I shall pue that by examples many on
For mulyke makyth one a mulycyon
Grāmer to be good grammareon
And also geomytry a godo geomettycyon
And chorlysh condycyons a chorle for to be
And so of euery other estate & degre
And where gentyll condycyons be doutles
In any pson there is gentylnes
Than as verte w makyth a good man
So gentyl condycyons a gentylman
All those poynt I thynk must nedys grauntyd be
what arguyst more therof forth let vs see
How feyst than to pryde wrath & enuy
They be nought & euyll I thynk verely
what is mekenes pacyens & charyte
Euerychone a gentyll & good ppte
what is couetous & lyberalyte
The furst good the other nought for surete
what is gloteny sloth & lechery
They be nought all who can that deny
what abstynens good besynes & chastyte
Vertcous & gentyll ppertes they be
Syth ye haue graūtyd thys I shall proue playn
I am a gentylman so is none of you twayn
Furst for pryde your raynēt shewyth what ye be

For ye wyll neuer be content except that ye
Haue the fynest cloth & sylke for to were
Of oryent colours & all your gere
So costly/your houys gylt gloryously
As though ye wold therin your self deyfy
ye couet euermore goods land & rent
what so euer ye get yet neuer content
wrathfull ye be mouyd to anger anon
And enuyous dysdaynyng euery man
And as for me I am content alwey
wyth a pore cotage & symple aray
I dysdayn no man & yet pacyently
Can suffer to be callyd knaue and not angry
Sountyme I call hym knaue agayn in hast
And when I haue sayd my anger is past
ye haue your beddys so pleasaunt & soft
wherein ye ease your self to long and to oft
whych makyth your bodyes so tender to be
That ye can not endure labour lyke me
wyth no maner course fode ye wyll be fede
But wyth pleasand wynys & most whytest brede
wyth flesh & fysh most dylycate & fat
All fruts & spyces that can be gat
And when ye haue had such pleasaunt refeccyons
To aswage your carn all insurreccyons
what so euer she be wyfe wedow or mayde
If she come in the way she shalbe assayd
Thou liest sklãderours chorle for I thik of troth
Thou vsyst sych vyse more then we both
Nay by cokks body I vse no sych lyfe
For I am content wyth blak maud my wyfe
Trow ye ý I care for these nise proude prinys
These paityd popagays that hold vp their chynns
And loke so sinoterly as who say they wold
Haue euery mã woo them that doth them behold
Tote man for all sych venereall werks
As good is the foule as the fayre in the derk
Thou sayst trew / drake is good Inough for swyne
yet thou answerest to no reson of myne
Thy reasons all ryght well answere I can
For I sey it be cõmeth a noble man
To haue rych appell & clothyng
And goodly houys of costly bydyng
And that ych man accordyng to hys degre

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Be knowyn from other and what they be
For yf such costly thyngs were not made
work for pore peple coud neuer be hade
And many folks than shuld fall to Idylnes
whych is the moder of vyce and wrytchydnes
P ye but I delyte noo such vanytese worldly
I delyte nother in sloth nor gloteny
I dyg and delfe & labour for my lyvyng
Neuer ydyll but somewhat euer doyng
Dayly I ren and go bere swete & swynk
I ete broun bryde and drynk small drynk
Content wt cours meat what so euer it be
so it quench the hunger it suffyseth me
These poyntes I use whych I haue rehersyd now
Be not these gentyl condycyons I pray you
M If thou use them nede compellyth the therto
For if thou coudist hardly thou wold other wise do
P what I wold doo then ye can not tell
It is not to purpose but thys I wot well
Syth that I use my lyfe in such good maner
whych such gentyll condycyons expressyd here
More than ye both do styll contynuyng
And syth that gentyll condycyons is the thyng
To make a gentylman the cause prynceypall
wherin I vse my life most of vs all
who can by any reason deny than
But that I am of us all most gentylman
R In feyth yf thou be gentylman therfore
Thou art a gentylman agaynst thy wyll full sore
M Syth I se he stadyth in his own cõceit so well
That oppynyon we shall neuer expell
From hym by no argument nor reason
Therfore now for a lytyll seasson
Let vs dept from hym I hold it best
Then we shall haue wt hym some rest
R I agre therto for caton sayth this
Contra verbosas noli contendere verbis
Contend nor argu neuer in no matter
wt hym that is full of words and clatter
M wherefore for a season let us both dept
R I am agreid therto wt all myn hart
P why sirs than wyll ye dept & be gon
M ye that we wyll farewel for a season
For to tarry here lenger we see no grete cause

Et exeant

Then fare ye well as wyse as two dawys
And I pray god sende you such grace both twayn
To be stark cockeolde or ye come agayn
Now masters they be both gone away
Therefore one worde now harke what I sey
wee see well now by playne expience
when a man is set in a wyllfull credens
All to fortefye hys owne oppynyon
If god hym selfe than wold wyth hym reason
In effect it shall no more auayle
Than w^t a whyp to dryfe a snayle
Therfore no remedy is that I can see
For yuell men that be in auctoryte
But let them alone tyll god wyll send
A tyme tyll our gouernours may intend
of all enormytes the reformacyon
And bring in theyr handis the rod of correcyon
And the reformyng of iniuryes them self see
And wyll say p̄cylely thus it shall be
For exortacyons techyng and p̄chyng
Gestyng and raylyng they mend no thyng
For the amendement of the world is not in me
Nor all the grete arguments that we thre
Haue made syth we resonyd here to gedyr
Do not p̄uayle the weyght of a fether
For the helpyng of any thyng that is amys
we can not help it then syth it so is
I wyll let the world wagg & home wyll I goo
And dryf the plowgh as I was wont to do
And praye god send us peas I wyl no farr well
Therfore masters all now fare ye well

Hic miles & mercator iterum intrant

K Now by my troth I am glad that he is gon
M And so am I by swete seynt John
I hard not a chorll thys seuyn yere
Shew so curst reasons as he hath done here
For the mayntenaunce of hys oppynyon
yet he hys dysseuyd for all hys reason
For it is necessary that rulers be
To haue possesyons to mayntayn theyr degre
And those few to dryfe the multytude all
of the other people to labour to fall
For yf the rulers drof them not theyto
The peple wold be ydyll & nothyng doo

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And most reason is that gouernaunce
Shuld come to such rulers by inherytaunce
Rather than to haue them chose by eleccyon
Oft tymys by drede mede and affeccyon
Men of euyll conscyens that grete tyraunts be
Rede old cronyclys the proue ye shall see
And though they haue grete wyt and lernyng
Yet so proud they be therof they fere nothyng
Nother god nor man but euermore styll
wt out councell or aduyse folow theyr own wyll
But they that by inherytaunce rulers be
Though they haue no grete lernyng yet we see
yet makyth them more fereful & better cōtent
To folow wyse mens councell and aduysement
And syth that yt hath ben so long cōtynnyd
Enherytours to haue rule and so long usyd
And that they haue ruled by as dyscressyon
As the other that haue be chose by eleccyon
If that order of rule by successyon of blode
Shuld be dystroyd it shuld doo hurte & no good
M That reason is so grete no man can debarr
Neuertheles that churlysh knaue that carter
After hys fond oppynyon thynkyth thus
Hymselfe more gentylman than us
K And therin he lyeth for by expiens we see
That gentyll cōdycyons most comenly be
In them that be of noble blode borne
For take .xx. carters whych neuer were beforne
Aquayntyd let them be to gyder
Take .xx. straynge gentylmen in lyke maner
These churlysh carters I dare well say
wyll not agre to gyder skant one day
wt out chydyng quarrellyng or fyghtyng
ychone wyll stele from other and be pykyng
And stryke whych of them at the skot shall pay lest
And indeuer them who can play the knaue best
But these gentylmen I warant you wyll study
who can shew to other most ruytely
And of theyr gentylnes wyll pfer to pay
For the other and shew what pleasurs they may
So touchyng gentylnes I say surely
Men of grete byrth vse it most comynly
M There can be no truer saying nor sentence
And the cause therof we see by expience

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For these pore wretches that haue no thyng
Must be nygardys churlysh and spayryng
But gentylmen be taught to be lyberall
And so they may be for they haue where wt all
K And as touchyng noblenes that argument
whych the plowman made late puyth euydent
That gentylmen borne to land must nedys be
For sufficyency of most nobylyte
For belyde goddys gyfts of grace & of nature
As wyt and bodely stryngh yet they be sure
Of other ryches as of land and rent
To auoyd nede so they be more sufficyent
of them self than other pore people doutles
Then yf nede of straunge helpe cause wrechydnes
And suffyslauns be cause wrechydnes
M A better reason no man can deuyse
And yet farther I thynk lykewyse
He that hath grete haboundance of ryches
May vse lyberalyte and gentylnes
And also it is euer necessary
That some lyue in welth and some in mysery
And let churllys bable and say what they wyll
Yit hath ben so euer and wyll be so styll
For it is almyghty goddys purueaunce
wyse men of folys to haue the gouernaunce
And they that rule well I beseech Jhesu
Send them good lyfe & long to contynew
Amen.

The philosopher

ye soferayns all dyscrete & excellent
Before whom thys dyalog shewyd hath be
Touchyng iij. poynts by wey of argument
Furst what is gentylnes & what nobylyte
And who shulde be chose to hye auctoryte
Thys questyons they be so hye and sottell
Few dare plume to dyffyne them well

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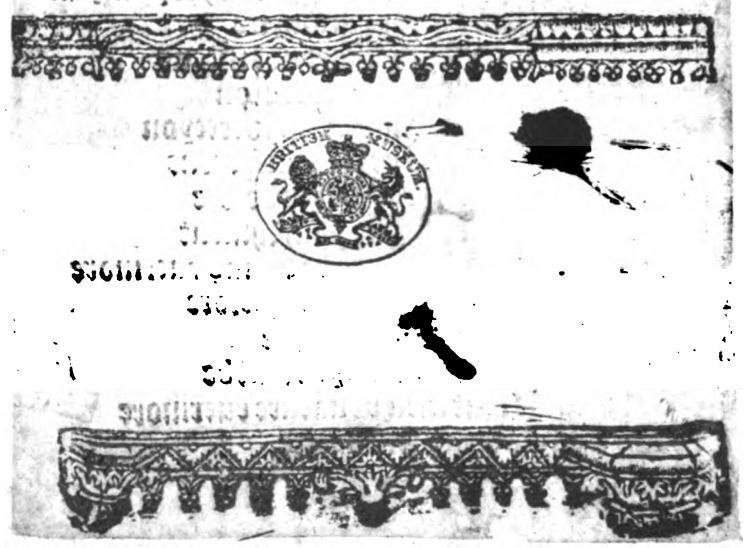
Cyet I thynk now vnder your correccyons
The thyng that makyth a gentylman to be
ys but vertew & gentyll condycyons
whych aswell in pore men oft tymys we se
As in men of grete byrth or hye degre
And also vycious & churlyish cõdycyons
May be in men born to grete possessyons
¶ And forther as touchyng nobylyte
yet standyth mnch pt I thynk doutles
In suffycyencye reason doth agre
But that suffysaunce makyng noblenes
Must nedys be ãnexid vnto goodnes
For suffysauns is not the cause pryncypall
That god his noble but hys goodnes wythall
¶ So vertue is euer the thyng pryncypall
That gentylnes & noblenes doth insue
Then these hedys rulers & gouernours all
Shuld come therto be cause of theyr vertue
And in auctoryte they ought not contynue
Except they be good men dyscrete & wyse
And haue a loue & zele vnto Justyce
¶ wherfore souereyns all that here present be
Now marke well these reasons here brought in,
Both agayns men of hye & of low degre
For thys intent only to rebuke syn
For the best wey that is for one to be gyn
To cõuert the people by exortacyon
ys to plwade them by naturall reason
¶ For when that a man by hys owne reason
Juggyth hym selfe for to offend
That grudgyth his cõtcyens & gyffyth cõpuncyon
In to hys herte to cause hym amend
But such blynd best that wyl not intend
To here no good councell nor reason
Ought by the law to haue sharp correccyon
¶ But then yf the laws be not suffycyent
whych haue be made & ordeynyd before
To gyfe ther fore cõdygne ponyshment
The pryncys & gouernours be bound euermore
To cause new laws to be made therfore
And to put such men in auctoryte
That good men Just & indyfferent be
¶ But because that men of nature euermore
Be fraple & folowyng sensualyte

yt is impossyble in a manner therfore
For any gouernours that be in auctoryte
At all tymys Just & indyfferent to be
Except they be brydelyd & therto compellyd
By some strayt laws for them deuysyd
¶ As thus that no man such rome ocupye
But certayn yerys & than to be remouyd
yet that whyle bound to attend dylygently
And yf he offend & surely prouyd
wyth out any fauour that he be ponyhyshyd
For the ponyshment of a Juge or officer
Doth more good than of thousand other
¶ And vntyll that such orders be deuysyd
Substaunceyally/and put in execucyon
Loke neuer to see the world amended
Nor of the gret myschefes the reformacion
But they that be bounde to see the thyngs done
I pray god of his grace put in theyr myndys
To reforme shortly suche thynges amys
¶ And though that I my selfe now pease
Thus myn oppynyon haue publyshed
Or any of my felowes here in this place
In any poynt here haue vs abused
we beseche you to holde vs excused
And so the auctour here of requyreth you all
And thus I cõmyt you to god eternall.

A M E N.

Johẽs rastell me fieri fecit

Cum priuilegio regali.



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